



## Letter to the Editor

## Significance of 'Letters to the Editor' in research



Dear Editor,

We have come across a letter (Prabhu S, Acharya AB, Muddapur MV. Response to "Significance of descriptive statistics in forensic anthropology research", published in the November 2013 issue of the Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine. *J Forensic Leg Med* 2014;22:148-149.) written in response to our communication emphasizing on the significance (importance) of descriptive statistics in forensic anthropology research.<sup>1</sup>

Instead of providing the additional information sought on the descriptive statistics of the data used in their research, authors have attempted to diminish the importance of the same in forensic anthropology research on stature estimation and have resorted to personalized remarks which are absolutely unnecessary and unacceptable. We take serious note on the use of certain personalized statements in their response letter such as: '*They seem to believe that descriptive statistics is ...*', '*The authors seem to have misunderstood a basic lesson in statistics ...*', and regarding the use of the word 'significance', *perhaps they are unaware that ...*'

Discussions and disagreements in science are welcome and should be encouraged but not personalized remarks/comments. Hence, the authors are advised to confine to the subject matter instead of interpreting and assessing our awareness/beliefs/understanding and knowledge of the topic. Regarding the issue in question, even though the authors agree that descriptive statistics are able to provide some useful information they do not provide the necessary information for reasons best known to them.

It needs to be emphasized here that many a times the purpose of writing a letter to editor is to extract more information/clarifications on a subject that is likely to be useful to the future researches and scientific community at large. For the very reason reputed journals like 'Journal of Forensic and Legal Medicine' encourage authors to write letters on relevant topics and frequently publish them. Furthermore even the 'letters to the editor' go through a similar peer review process as any other submitted paper before these

are published, thus, validating its contents. Contacting the authors directly can never bring out the desired results in this regard since such personal communications with the authors are limited to an individual level. It's time that the researchers realize the significance of 'letters to the editor' and do not seek personal communications as its alternative.

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*Conflict of interest*

None to declare.

**Reference**

1. Kanchan T, Krishan K. Significance of descriptive statistics in forensic anthropology research. *J Forensic Leg Med* 2013;20(8):1151.

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